

**OPENING STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR JACK REED  
CHAIRMAN, SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**ROOM SD-G50  
DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
Tuesday, October 19, 2021**

*To conduct a confirmation hearing on the nominations of  
Mr. Nickolas H. Guertin to be Director of Operational Test and Evaluation;  
Ms. Alexandra N. Baker to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy;  
Mr. John P. Coffey to be General Counsel of the Department of the Navy; and  
Mr. Douglas R. Bush to be Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and  
Technology*  
(As prepared for delivery)

**REED:** Before I begin my formal remarks, I would like to recognize the passing of two extraordinary soldiers, General Colin Powell and General Raymond Odierno. Their selfless service to the nation, remarkable courage and remarkable commitment to the men and women of our armed services has sustained and inspired us all. They have left a legacy of honor and commitment that will be a beacon for future generations of Americans. To their families, I express our profound sympathy. Thank you.

The Committee meets this morning to consider the nominations of Mr. Nickolas Guertin to be Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, Ms. Alexandra Baker to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Mr. John Coffey to be General Counsel of the Department of the Navy, and Mr. Douglas Bush to be Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology. I thank the nominees for their long careers of service to the United States and their willingness to assume these important roles.

I would also like to welcome the family members who are with us today. Mr. Guertin, I welcome your wife, Maria, son, Enrico, and daughter, Isabella. Ms. Baker, I welcome your husband, Sam. Mr. Coffey, I welcome your wife, Anne, and son, Connor. And Mr. Bush, I welcome your wife, Patricia.

Mr. Guertin, you are nominated to be the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, or DOT&E. This position is responsible for all operational and live fire review, testing, and evaluation activities. Your long career of technology and weapons development in military, industry, and academic roles should serve you well.

There are a number of challenges that will require your attention within the Department. Of note, it is important for DOT&E to be independent and resist pressure from the services and industry to deploy systems that are not yet operationally effective. You will be responsible for oversight of a number of programs, including the F-35, the Army Integrated Visual Augmentation System (IVAS), the Navy Ford-class carrier, space satellite systems, and missile defense programs. While there is always a demand to move more rapidly in acquisition, it is

critical that you ensure we do so prudently. Indeed, we must move both rapidly and prudently in acquisition.

Another challenge will be developing ways to test new information technology programs, including commercial cloud computing services, as well as ensuring robust cybersecurity testing on all systems. In addition, concerns have been raised about potential reductions in the workforce that supports live fire testing. I would ask that you share how you plan on addressing these challenges.

Ms. Baker, you are nominated to serve as Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. Your current role as Senior Director for Strategic Planning on the National Security Council and previous experiences in Congress, the DOD, and OMB will be valuable in this new position.

If confirmed, you will have a broad scope of responsibility in advising and assisting the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Secretary of Defense on a range of issues, including strategic competition with a rising China, the COVID-19 pandemic, cyber threats, and climate change.

In the immediate term, the Policy office is revising the 2022 National Defense Strategy. The NDS will play a critical role in defining the United States' national security priorities, but coordinating it across the Department and the federal government will be a challenge. I hope you will share how you plan to integrate the NDS with the Administration's whole-of-government approach.

In the coming months, the Department will also publish its Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). I am interested in your testimony on a number of issues relating to the NPR, including modernization of all three legs of the triad, updating our nuclear facilities, the role of arms control, and ongoing strategic stability talks.

Mr. Coffey, you are nominated to be General Counsel of the Department of the Navy. This position is responsible for providing legal services throughout the Department in a vast array of fields, including acquisition-related law, arms control, business and commercial law, and national-security related law, among many others. The General Counsel also assists in ethics, intelligence, criminal investigation, and law enforcement activities. I would note your extensive legal career in the Navy, private sector, and academia in preparing you for this role.

One of Secretary Austin's priorities is to eradicate extremism within the ranks. While we continue to believe that the number of extremists in the ranks remains very small, even one is too many. I hope you will share your views on how you will approach this issue, especially as the line between action, thought, and speech becomes more difficult to define.

Mr. Bush, you are nominated to be Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology. If confirmed, you will oversee Army research, development, acquisition, program sustainment, and logistics activities as the Army is undertaking its most expansive modernization effort in decades. You will be well served by your experience which includes nearly two decades of congressional legislative work, including with the House Armed Services Committee.

You will be responsible for balancing the need for rigorous cost management with the need to move quickly and use tailored acquisition approaches. To achieve this, it will be necessary to strengthen the Army's workforce and capacity while improving data available to the Army and DOD to more effectively acquire and sustain Army weapon systems.

Importantly, you will also be responsible for overcoming the so-called "Valley of Death" – ensuring that the Army is able to turn research innovations into real operational capabilities. This will require strengthening connections between research and engineering activities and the Army's acquisition programs and defense contractors. It will also include investing in and protecting the people and infrastructure at organizations like the Army's labs and test ranges. I look forward to hearing how you will address these challenges.

Thank you, again, to our nominees. I look forward to your testimonies.

Let me now recognize Ranking Member Inhofe.